

REMARKS

Prior to this Amendment and Response, claims 7 and 25-39 were pending in the Application. Herein claims 17, 22, 25, 27, 29-30, 32-34, and 39 were amended, claim 28 was cancelled, and claims 40-41 were added. Therefore, upon entry of the Amendment, claims 7, 17-27, and 29-41 will remain pending in the Application. Entry of the Amendment of and allowance of the pending claims is respectfully requested.

Claim Objections – Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant gratefully acknowledges the Examiner's indication in paragraph 10 of the office action that claim 28 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form and the Rule 75 objection were overcome with respect to claim 25. In response, Applicants have rewritten claim 28, now cancelled, into independent form as new claim 40, including the limitations of claims 25 through 27. In addition, Applicants have addressed the Rule 75 Objection by removing the phrase "in the region" from claim 25 (and not including it in claim 28), as described below.

Claim Objections – 37 C.F.R. §1.75

In paragraph 3 and 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner objected to claims 7 and 17-39 under 37 C.F.R. §1.75 as failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the invention, specifically by using phrases such as "may be", "may" and "can be" within claim limitations. In response, Applicants have amended those claims containing the objected-to language (specifically claims 17, 22, and 32) to remove it.

On addition, the Examiner objected to claim 25 on the same ground, stating that the phrase "the region" lacked an antecedent basis. In response, Applicants have amended claim 25 to remove this phrase.

In light of the amendments described above, Applicants believe that this ground for objection has been overcome.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §102

In paragraphs 5 and 6 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 17-20, 25-27, 29, and 39 under 35 U.S.C. §102 as being anticipated by *Goshorn et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 5,495,337). In response, Applicants have amended independent claims 17 and 25 to more clearly distinguish them from *Goshorn et al.*

Specifically, claim 17 has been amended to recite that the coherent light source of the present invention is used to create a first *narrow* line that moves with respect to the surface being inspected. This is diametrically opposed to the teaching of *Goshorn et al.*, which requires the use of a pair of "wide laser beams 53 and 54" (col. 4, lines 33-34) that each project a beam that extends transversely across substantially the width of the printed circuit board (col. 4, lines 36-38).

Similarly, claim 25 has been amended to recite that the inspection is performed by forming a *plurality of lines* on the surface. *Goshorn et al.*, on the other hand, forms but a single line (Figure 2a).

In light of the Amendments above, independent claims 17 and 25 are now believed to be in condition for allowance. Claims 18-20 are dependent directly or indirectly from claim 17, and claims 26-27 are dependent directly or indirectly from claim 25, and are therefore distinguishable from *Goshorn et al.* for the reasons provided above. (Claims 29 and 39, now depend from claim 40, which (as claim 28)

the Examiner indicated contained allowable subject matter, and are therefore believed to be allowable as well.

In light of the amendments described above, this ground for rejection is believed to be overcome.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §103

In paragraph 7-9 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 7, 21-24, and 30-38 under 35 U.S.C. §103 as follows: claim 21-24 and 30-38 as being unpatentable over *Goshorn et al.* and Paul et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,064,478); and claim 7 being unpatentable over *Goshorn et al.* and Sayag (U.S. Patent No. 5,055,667).

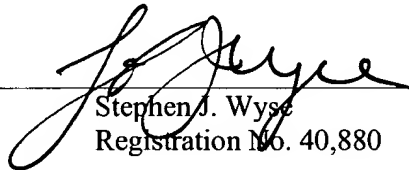
In response, Applicants note that claim 7 depends from claim 17, which was distinguished from *Goshorn et al.* as described above. (*Sayag* was cited simply to illustrate that a computer means is a common feature of imaging devices.) Similarly claims 21-24 depend indirectly from claim 17 and therefore include its distinguishing features (*Paul et al.* was cited simply as teaching the use of two different wavelengths emanating from two light sources.) Finally, claims 30-38 now depend directly or indirectly from claim 40, which (as claim 28) the Examiner indicated contained allowable subject matter, and are therefore believed to be allowable as well.

In light of the foregoing, claims 7, 17-27, and 29-41, particularly as now amended, are believed to be in condition for allowance. Accordingly, entry of the Amendment and allowance of the pending claims is respectfully requested

Respectfully submitted,

Scheef & Stone, L.L.P.

Date: 29 MARCH 2004



Stephen J. Wyse
Registration No. 40,880

5956 Sherry Lane, Suite 1400
Dallas, Texas 75225
Telephone: (214) 706-4200
Facsimile: (214) 706-4242
E-mail: stephen.wyse@scheefandstone.com